DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 247 825 HE 017 473

TITLE Increasing Minority Access to the Licensed Professions: A Regents Action Paper.
INSTITUTION New York State Education Dept., Albany. Office of the Professions.
PUB DATE Feb 84
NOTE 36p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Access to Education; *Change Strategies; Degrees (Academic); Elementary Secondary Education; Enrollment Trends; Ethnic Groups; *Graduate Study; Higher Education; *Minority Groups; Position Papers; *Professional Education; Public Policy; Racial Differences; State Action; *State Boards of Education; Statewide Planning; Undergraduate Study
IDENTIFIERS *New York

ABSTRACT

The underrepresentation of minority groups in graduate and professional education in New York State and approaches to address this problem are discussed. Components include: limited awareness of professional career options among minority students; inadequate counseling at important stages of education; lack of minority professional role models; low expectations; inadequate training in fundamental skills; insufficient opportunities for special help and remediation; inflexible admissions procedures for professional programs; and inadequate retention efforts. Included are Board of Regents' recommendations for elementary/secondary education, undergraduate education, graduate and professional education, and for all levels of education. The Regents recommend that graduate and professional schools make special efforts to increase the enrollment, retention, and graduation of minority students in educational programs leading to licensure in the professions. Action strategies for each of the four recommendations are included. Appended materials include enrollment rates by race in New York State, 1980-1981; racial/ethnic distribution of students in selected grades, 1982-83; and trend data on degrees conferred by four racial/ethnic groups, 1976-1981. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

HE

ED247825

INCREASING MINORITY ACCESS TO THE LICENSED PROFESSIONS A REGENTS ACTION PAPER

The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Albany, New York 12230

February 1984

HE 017 423

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

NYS Education Dept

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

NEW YORK 1784 1984 THE STATE OF LEARNING

THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS AND THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY
AND COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION
THE NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12234

To Interested Parties:

Increasing Minority Access to the Licensed Professions -- A Regents Action Paper was approved by the Board of Regents at their February 1984 meeting in Buffalo. It represents the culmination of many months of work and reflects the suggestions and ideas of many individuals and constituencies. I encourage you to consider the ways in which you or the organization you represent can assist in improving educational access and services for members of minority groups in New York. We would welcome suggestions regarding this paper as well as offers to assist in achieving the Regents' objectives. Please direct any communications to the Office of the Professions, New York State Education Department, Room 3029 Cultural Education Center, Albany, NY 12230.

Sincerely,

Gordon M. Ambach

INCREASING MINORITY ACCESS TO THE LICENSED PROFESSIONS

A REGENTS ACTION PAPER

The State Education Department does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, marital status, veteran status, national origin, race, or sex in the educational programs and activities which it operates. This policy is in compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Inquiries concerning this policy may be referred to the Department's Affirmative Action Officer, Education Building, Albany, NY 12234.

The University of the State of New York

The State Education Department

Albany, New York 12230

February 1984

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Regents of The University (with years when terms expire)

1988	WILLARD A. GENRICH, Chancellor, LL.B., L.H.D., LL.D., Litt.D., D.C.S., D.C.L., Sc.D.	Buffalo
1987	MARTIN C. BARELL, Vice Chancellor, B.A., I.A., LL.B., LL.D.	Muttontown
1986	KENNETH B. CLARK, A.B., M.S., Ph.D., LL.D., L.H.D., D.Sc.	Hastings on Hudson
1989	EMLYN I. GRIFFITH, A.B., J.D.	Rome
1991	JORGE L. BATISTA, B.A., J.D., LL.D.	Bronx
1986	LAURA BRADLEY CHODOS, B.A., M.A.	Vischer Ferry
1991	LOUISE P. MATTEONI, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.	Bayside
1988	J. EDWARD MEYER, B.A., LL.B., L.H.D.	Chappaqua
1987	R. CARLOS CARBALLADA, B.S., L.H.D.	Rochester
1988	FLOYD S. LINTON, A.B., M.A., M.P.A., D.C.L.	Miller Place
1988	SALVATORE J. SCLAFANI, B.S., M.D.	Staten Island
1989	MIMI LIEBER, B.A., M.A.	Manhattan
1985	SHIRLEY C. BROWN, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.	Albany
1990	ROBERT M. BEST, B.S.	Binghamton
1990	NORMA GLUCK, B.A., M.S.W.	Manhattan
1990	THOMAS R. FREY, A.B., LL.B.	Rochester

President of The University and Commissioner of Education

GORDON M. AMBACH

Executive Deputy Commissioner of Education

ROBERT J. MAURER

Deputy Commissioner for Higher and Professional Education

DONALD J. NOLAN

Assistant Commissioner for the Professions

FRANK C. ABBOTT

Coordinator of Professional Education Services

DANIEL W. SZETELA

Minority Professional Education Coordinator

ARTHUR L. WALTON, JR.

CONTENTS

		Page
I.	FOREWORD	vii
II.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	ix
III.	INTRODUCTION	1
IV.	STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	3
V.	RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR ACTION	6
	A. All Levels of Education	6
	B. Elementary/Secondary Education	8
	C. Undergraduate Education	11
	D. Graduate and Professional Education	12
VI.	APPENDICES	15
	A. Organization Chart - Office of the Professions	16
	B. Professions Regulated by the Regents	17
	C. Tables	18
	D. Summary of Regents Conference on the Professions	22

I. FOREWORD

The Regents are committed to the elimination of barriers which impede the educational development of any person. While the Regents have made this commitment known in a number of statements and legislative proposals, and have witnessed some progress toward achieving greater access for minorities and disadvantaged populations, there still exists a severe underrepresentation of minorities in the licensed professions.

The Regents strongly endorse the premise that equal educational opportunity in programs that lead to licensure is a right of all New York State residents. Also, the Regents recognize that minorities and other disadvantaged groups have been historically—and continue to be—denied equal education access and subsequently equal opportunity to participate in the mainstream of American life.

Persons of the various ethnic and racial groups in our society are capable of achievement at the various educational and occupational levels in approximately the same proportions. Certain social conditions make the attainment of these levels more difficult and in many cases, at present, impossible. Our State and nation must provide equal educational opportunity and access to the necessary resources for all persons regardless of race, religion, national origin, or economic status to ensure that each person becomes all that he or she is capable of being.

Lack of opportunity and support for minorities at the various educational levels, and subsequently in the licensed professions, must be addressed through concerted and effective action on both an immediate and a long-term basis. This paper calls for a comprehensive and coordinated approach that will require the sustained efforts of the educational system, the professional boards, professional associations and societies, State government, private industry, parent groups, and others.

The Regents recognize that New York State and the nation have a practical as well as a moral stake in achieving the goal of equal opportunity for minorities in professional education programs and ultimately professional practice. In the interest of all New Yorkers, we commit ourselves to this goal. We have studied and talked about the problem too long; the time for action is now.

Willard A. Genrich

Chancellor

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For many years, equal educational opportunity has been one of the Regents major goals and top priorities. The Regents are committed to eliminating barriers which impede any person's educational development.

In more recent years the severe underrepresentation of minorities in the licensed professions has been a subject of major concern for the Regents. Particular concern for the licensed professions reflects the fact that, by Education Law, practice of a profession is limited to those who meet stated requirements. The Regents are regulators of these areas and caretakers of the public trust. Proper administration of the professions requires that equity and balance be major considerations in professional education and licensing.

Historically, minority participation in educational programs that lead to professional licensure has always been relatively low. While in the early 1970's there was some increase in enrollment of minorities in certain fields, more recently New York has witnessed a decline in the number of minorities enrolling in and graduating from programs leading to professional licensure.

During 1982-83 several important initiatives addressed the issue of access of underrepresented minorities to professional training and practice, including: establishing and filling the position of Minority Professional Education Coordinator, an officer to be principally responsible for a wide range of activities to promote access; establishing a Department-wide task force whose primary charge is to assist in developing policies and programs that will encourage and increase the number of minorities in the licensed professions; undertaking the development of a draft Regents action paper on Increasing Minority Access to the Licensed Professions; and hosting the Regents 1983 Conference on the Professions which provided opportunity for over 200 participants from a variety of groups and organizations to discuss and react to a draft of the Regents paper. In addition, several meetings were held with professional boards and with personnel from major foundations, professional schools, community-based organizations and minority access programs to begin discussion of collaborative activities designed to increase minority access.

1984 Regents' legislative and policy initiatives aimed at assisting minorities in their pursuit of educational opportunities include:

- An increase of $5 million in the appropriation for the Higher Education Opportunity Program for supportive services, financial aid, and expanded enrollments.

- Two proposals to assist minorities through summer enrichment programs, one for secondary students and a second for postsecondary students. These programs would enable talented minorities to receive training and exposure that would afford them a better chance to pursue professional careers.

- The Regents Action Plan for Elementary and Secondary Education lays out a program to improve and make more equal the education of all New Yorkers.

The Board recognizes that these proposals are not sufficient to address the problems minorities face, particularly in the area of professional education.

Increasing minority participation in the licensed professions will require additional effort, both short-term and long-term. In the short term it will be necessary for institutions to make special efforts and take greater advantage of the existing pool of minority students. There must be provisions for flexibility in admissions requirements, alternative educational programs, appropriate resources and services to enhance minority students' choices of gaining entry to and successfully completing professional education programs. In the long term, New York State must work toward systematic changes in the educational process that will ensure parity for minorities at all educational levels and ultimately in the licensed professions. To achieve parity will require firm commitments, coordinated efforts, and substantial resource investments.

This paper identifies components of the problem and sets forth recommendations that call for comprehensive and coordinated activities both on a short-term and long-term basis. The components of the problem, identified in Section IV of this paper, are as follows:

* Limited AWARENESS of professional career options among minority students.

* Inadequate COUNSELING at stages of education when critical decisions are made.

* Lack of ASPIRATION resulting from the above two failings, language difficulties and self-image problems.

* Lack of minority professional ROLE MODELS.

* LOW EXPECTATIONS of minority children, contributing to poor self-image, lower aspirations, and lower achievement levels.

* Inadequate training in FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS — especially math, science, and English.

* Insufficient opportunities for SPECIAL HELP, tutoring, and remediation.

* Inflexible or insensitive ADMISSIONS procedures in professional programs.

* Inadequate steps to promote RETENTION through planning and provision for special help during high school and professional study.

* Lack of adequate FUNDING to implement programs aimed at increasing minority participation.

* Lack of INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT to affirmative action.

The recommendations and action strategies cited in Section V of this paper attempt to eliminate the major obstacles impeding minority access to the licensed professions. No one paper or action plan can provide fully prescriptive responses to the myriad of complex problems. However, the recommendations and strategies for action presented herein are fundamental and essential to greater access for

minorities to the professions. When implemented, they will mark a significant advancement toward remedying this situation in New York State.

The Regents recommendations are as follows:

A. All Levels of Education

The Regents recommend:

That formal mechanisms be established, both at the regional and State level, to assure that local education agencies, public libraries, professional groups, institutions of higher education and the State Education Department collaborate on activities designed to significantly increase the proportion of minorities in the licensed professions on both a short-term and a long-term basis. (Strategies for action are advanced.)

B. Elementary/Secondary Education

The Regents recommend:

That elementary and secondary education institutions make special efforts to prepare and retain minority students in education programs that are required for admission to, and for successful completion of, pre-professional and professional education programs. Efforts to combat attrition among minorities must begin at the pre-school and elementary school levels and continue throughout the high school years. (Strategies for action are advanced.)

C. Undergraduate Education

The Regents recommend:

That two- and four-year educational institutions make special efforts to enroll and assist minority students in educational programs that qualify them for licensure in the professions. (Strategies for action are advanced.)

D. Graduate and Professional Education

The Regents recommend:

That graduate and professional schools make special efforts to increase the enrollment, retention and graduation of minority students in educational programs leading to licensure in the professions. (Strategies for action are advanced.)

The following pages examine Regents' goals and activities aimed at increasing educational access for minorities and the barriers which prevent equal opportunity for minorities to pursue careers in the professions, and lead to the recommendations and strategies for action needed throughout the educational structure.

III. INTRODUCTION

Equal opportunity in education is and has been for many years a top priority and major goal of the Regents. In 1972, the Regents introduced a statement of policy and proposed action on Minority Access to and Participation in Postsecondary Education (Position Paper 15). In this statement, the Regents called on all institutions of postsecondary education to state their goals for integration and to develop programs of affirmative action to realize these goals. More recently, a commitment to redressing the underrepresentation of minorities in higher and professional education was reflected in the Regents 1980 Statewide Plan for the Development of Postsecondary Education. The Plan called for major increases, by 1990, in the proportion of degrees awarded in New York to members of minority groups at each degree level--associate, baccalaureate, master's, doctoral, and first professional. The objective of increasing minority access to the professions* has been reflected in a number of activities:

- Regional Conferences: One of the topics explored at the 1980-81 Regents/Commissioner's Regional Conferences was access of underrepresented minorities to professional education and practice. The ten conferences afforded the Regents and the Department the opportunity to involve more than 1,500 representatives of institutions, boards, and other groups in considering this issue.

- Legislation: For the 1981 legislative session the Regents advanced a proposal to underwrite programs to be arranged by postsecondary institutions in the various sectors for eight-week summer programs for promising college students from disadvantaged backgrounds, to heighten student interest and increase readiness to undertake professional study. In subsequent years similar proposals have been offered, applying to both secondary and college-level students.

- Conference on Minority Access: With the Assembly's Higher Education Committee, the Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus, and New York University the Department co-sponsored, June 12, 1981, an invitational Conference on Minority Access to the Professions. The conference attracted 150 participants representing all levels of education, professional boards and societies, community and commercial organizations as well as agency and legislative staff.

- Special Project on Minority Access to Graduate and Professional Education: In the Fall of 1981 the Department's Educational Information Centers and Bureau of Higher Education Opportunity Programs executed an agreement with New York University for a project to provide background information on minority access to graduate and professional education. The final report presents a statistical analysis and discussion of problems and recommendations and an annotated bibliography of books and articles on the subject.

- Creation of the Minority Professional Education Coordinator's Position: Approval of the Coordinator position was achieved in mid-summer 1982 and an appointment was made on September 9, 1982. The position was created and the Coordinator was appointed expressly to enhance the State Education Department's efforts to increase minority access to the licensed professions.

*See Appendix B for a list of the professions regulated by the Board of Regents and the State Education Department.

- New Emphasis in the Higher Education Opportunity Program: For the past several years the Department has included, in its process of considering grant applications for undergraduate HEOP programs at the independent institutions, consideration of initiatives for increasing the numbers of disadvantaged persons pursuing careers in which they are currently underrepresented. This has resulted in the establishment of a new program at the Columbia University School of Engineering and increased enrollment of HEOP students in a number of scientific, technological and pre-professional courses of study.

Although the above activities are indicative of support for the commitment to redressing the underrepresentation of minorities in higher and professional education, the necessary steps to achieve the Regents goal have yet to be fully developed and implemented.

Educational attainment, to a large degree, determines the extent to which minorities are able to participate in and therefore influence the decision-making process. A significant increase in the number of licensed minority professionals is essential to the achievement of social, economic and political equity for minorities.

Historically, minority access to graduate and professional education has never been adequate. Deficiencies, however, seem to be worsening. In recent years, after some improvement in the early 1970's, New York State has witnessed a dramatic decline in the numbers of minorities enrolling in and graduating from programs leading to professional licensure. The reasons for the extreme underrepresentation of minorities in the licensed professions are varied and complex and often extend far beyond the educational community into the fabric of American society. The resolution of this problem will, therefore, require an approach that enlists the active support and sharing of responsibility by many parties. It is evident that a broad-based and comprehensive approach that involves a variety of people (both inside and outside of the education community) is required if minorities are to achieve parity in the licensed professions and ultimately participate more fully in American society. Achieving parity for minorities in the licensed professions, after so many years of racial and ethnic discrimination, requires immediate action with firm commitments, well coordinated efforts and substantial resource investments.

IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In New York, as in the nation, there is an acute underrepresentation of minorities in professional education and, as a consequence, in the licensed professions. Although consistent and reliable data are not available across all the professions, the following illustrate the problem:

* In New York, whereas 30% of the public school enrollment and 17% of the undergraduate enrollment is Black or Hispanic, only 5-6% of first professional degrees go to members of those minority groups.

* In the fall of 1980, 2.4% of the enrollment in New York's dental schools was Black or Hispanic. The figure for medical schools was 6.7%; for law schools, 6.0%; for the school of veterinary medicine 1.9%; for the school of chiropractic 1-2%; for engineering schools 9.9%.

* The retention rate in undergraduate engineering programs in New York is 52% for minorities, 88% for non-minorities.

* Blacks and Hispanics account for less than 4% of the nation's dentists (approximately the same in New York), 7.5% of the registered nurses (10.4% in New York) and 1% of the architects. The best available estimates for Black and Hispanic podiatrists in New York is 2%; for physical therapists and occupational therapists 1-2%.

The roots of the problem are deep in American social and economic history. Blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans have endured centuries of discrimination, deprivation and exclusion with a net result of inferior occupational, educational and residential opportunities. The nation continues to reap results that are immensely expensive in human and economic terms. Among those results are reduced likelihoods that minority students will complete high school, will enter a graduate or professional education program, or will complete such advanced training. The problem affects not only the members of minority groups but all persons in our society. A vast human resource remains largely untapped — tragically wasted in an age when solving complex global problems such as environmental pollution, hunger, rapid technological change and international conflict demand that every resource be utilized. Dreams of a better world cannot be realized until equal opportunity to achieve and to contribute are achieved.

The problem of underrepresentation of minorities in the licensed professions has serious economic implications for New York State as well as the nation. For example, it is projected that through the year 2000, the number of minorities in the 16-24 year old age cohort will grow at a rate faster than the general population, leading to a greater proportion of minorities of college age. However, the dropout rate of minority youth between the ages of 16 and 19 has continued to increase. The social and economic consequences of ignoring minorities (as the population ages, the proportion of college age Whites decreases, the number of taxpayers supporting Social Security shrinks, and the ethnic mix changes) will not only ensure continued hardship for minorities, but an intolerable burden upon society as a whole. Contemporary America is characterized by high technology and skilled occupations. Immediate action must be taken to increase minority participation at all educational and occupational levels.

The components of the problem in professional education include the following:

* Limited AWARENESS of professional career options among minority students.

* Inadequate COUNSELING at stages of education when critical decisions are made.

* Lack of ASPIRATION resulting from the above two failings, language difficulties and self-image problems.

* Lack of minority professional ROLE MODELS.

* LOW EXPECTATIONS of minority children, contributing to poor self-image, lower aspirations, and lower achievement levels.

* Inadequate training in FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS -- especially math, science, and English.

* Insufficient opportunities for SPECIAL HELP, tutoring, and remediation.

* Inflexible or insensitive ADMISSIONS procedures in professional programs.

* Inadequate steps to promote RETENTION through planning and provision for special help during high school and professional study.

* Lack of adequate FUNDING to implement programs aimed at increasing minority participation.

* Lack of INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT to affirmative action.

The educational pipeline that ultimately leads to a career in the licensed professions begins at an early age and is complex and demanding. For many minority students, any hope of gaining access to and succeeding in educational programs which lead to careers in the professions is lost long before they enter high school. Minority students are faced with obstacles that impede and in some cases eliminate the opportunity not only to pursue careers in the professions but to realize their potential capabilities.

Clearly, the problem is multi-dimensional and indicative of a larger societal ill stemming from a variety of intentional and unintentional discriminatory practices, past and present, that adversely affect the social, educational, political and economic development of ethnic minorities. Various institutions have unilaterally attempted to address some portion of the problem. In a relatively small number of instances, institutions at different levels of the educational process have cooperated to enhance the participation and success rate of minorities in professional education (Macy's Health Professions Projects; Recruitment and Academic Programs for the Sciences, New York University are examples). A few special statewide programs, some tied to nationwide efforts, have been instituted to improve career counseling, and to provide special tutoring and other support services. The National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering and the

ASPIRA National Health Careers programs are well known examples, based in this State. There has not been, however, a coordinated and comprehensive statewide initiative to address the problem of severe underrepresentation of minorities in the licensed professions.

Increasing minority access to the professions will not be easy. The problem has many complex and interrelated elements. Commitment, diligence, and time will be required to make long-term systemic changes. However, the opportunity to achieve meaningful change has never been greater. Today, men and women committed to the principles of access and equality hold more positions of influence in our educational system than at any previous time. Never before have there been so many individuals--many of them minorities--who are not only committed to justice but who exercise authority within the very institutions where change is most needed.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

Increasing minority participation in the licensed professions must be viewed as an interdependent educational process requiring that all of the component parts be implemented simultaneously. However, there are no national or statewide efforts that approach the problem in this manner. Clearly, the nature and magnitude of the problem require a comprehensive and coordinated approach that includes the involvement of State government, educational institutions, private industry, parent groups, and others. As noted earlier, New York is fortunate to have many people holding important positions in our educational system who are committed to increasing minority access to the professions. These individuals are the single best hope for change. With coordination, resources, and encouragement the process of making incremental improvements can move forward.

The following recommendations and strategies for action reflect the broad scope of the problem. In formulating the recommendations, an extensive review of the literature was conducted and advice was received from advisory groups both inside and outside the Department. In addition, a number of recommendations contained in other reports were considered and included where appropriate. Some of these sources are: The Report of the Special Advisory Commission on Minority Enrollment in Medical Schools; Minorities in American Higher Education; Minority Group Participation in Graduate Education; Minority Access to Graduate and Professional Education; The Policy Statement of the 1982 Wingspread Conference on Postsecondary Programs for the Disadvantaged.

The recommendations and strategies contained in this paper do not suggest or imply that ethnic minorities need give up their cultural distinctiveness in order to gain increased access to the licensed professions or to participate more fully in all aspects of American life. Further, it should be clearly understood that the recommendations and subsequent strategies for action would benefit not only underrepresented minorities, but the educational system as a whole and society at large. Many of the recommendations in this paper have been set forth and endorsed previously in both statewide and national reports. This suggests that there is a broad base of support for their adoption and implementation. To be successful we must take the initiative now and not slacken in our efforts until the social, educational, and economic changes needed to make equal opportunity an accomplishment, rather than an objective, have been realized.

A. All Levels of Education

The problem of minority access to the professions is a national phenomenon. The New York State educational system under the auspices of the Board of Regents is ideally situated for developing solutions to the problem. New York State's educational system should be viewed as a pipeline leading ultimately to positions of leadership and influence in our society. The universal problem is that a disproportionate number of minorities drop out of the pipeline at various points in their educational careers. Research indicates that there are major "leakage points" in the pipeline, including acquisition of basic skills, completion of high school, entry into college, completion of college, entry into graduate or professional school, and completion of graduate or professional school. These leakage points and the tracking of minorities into inappropriate courses, in large measure, account for the significant underrepresentation of minorities in the licensed professions.

The recommendations and action strategies cited in this paper attempt to shut off the major leakage now occurring in the educational pipeline. To implement the recommendations and action strategies of this paper will require that financial and other resources be committed and coordinated in a manner that reflects the magnitude of the problem. Formal mechanisms will be needed to obtain broad participation from groups that share in the responsibility for redressing the problem of underrepresentation of minorities in the licensed professions.

The Regents recommend:

That formal mechanisms be established, both at the regional and State level, to assure that local education agencies, public libraries, professional groups, institutions of higher education and the State Education Department collaborate on activities designed to significantly increase the proportion of minorities in the licensed professions on both a short-term and a long-term basis. To this end, the following Strategies for Action must be undertaken:

Strategies for Action

A.1. The professions, under the leadership of the State Education Department and State Boards, must reach out to minority students at all levels of education, providing information, encouragement, and positive role models early in the educational pipeline and instructional and financial assistance at subsequent stages. Minority access committees must be established and activated in all the State Boards to provide a constant resource to the various parties involved in increasing minority access to the professions.

A.2. The State, through legislation, should establish and fund regional consortia which include representation from all levels of education, as well as the professions and other interested groups. The consortia should be responsible for implementing programs that begin at the earliest point in the educational process and extend through to professional licensure. Programs should be designed to increase student, parent, and school awareness of professional opportunities and educational requirements for professional study. Programs should also be pursued which retain minority students in educational activities that are prerequisite for professional study and licensure. Such programs should be based on a contractual agreement between the State Education Department and regional groups and provide for academic enrichment courses (math, science, and English); tutoring; counseling; visits to professional work sites; summer and academic year internships and preceptorships; long-term public information campaigns; and other appropriate projects. Each regional consortium would be responsible for submitting annual plans to the State Education Department. The plans would include goals, objectives, timetables, and activities aimed at increasing minority access and improving student retention at all levels of education.

A.3. The State Education Department should collaborate with other State agencies to develop training projects designed to increase the skill levels of minority staff currently employed as non-professionals and para-professionals who, with additional education and training, could

qualify for professional licensure. These projects should be designed with the needs of minority adults in mind and should provide flexible training activities.

A.4. An external advisory committee to the Commissioner of Education should be established with primary responsibility for developing and implementing strategies to increase the numbers of licensed minority professionals in New York State to a more proportional level. The advisory committee should include representatives from State government, community-based organizations, professional boards and associations, parent groups, educational institutions, private industry, philanthropic foundations, and other groups interested in improving representation of minorities in professional training and practice.

B. Elementary/Secondary Education

While it is possible in some professions to be licensed without undertaking a formal education program beyond high school (e.g., architecture and landscape architecture, engineering, land surveying, ophthalmic dispensing), and in some professions to complete only a program of professional training beyond high school (e.g., certified shorthand reporting, licensed practical nursing, registered nursing through a hospital diploma program, massage), licensure in many professions requires graduate-level training and in the great majority of professions, at least the completion of a college-level program. For this reason, efforts to improve the capacity of minority students to qualify for admission to professional education programs must begin at different points in the students' educational careers. The quality of the pre-collegiate educational experience is a critical factor in determining who ultimately goes to college, what kinds of institutions they attend, what fields of study they choose, how they perform in college and ultimately whether they graduate. Minorities have been, and continue to be, unwilling victims of a vicious cycle. Negative social and economic circumstances faced by pre-school youth often create problems which are difficult to address in our schools — particularly in the inner city, where the great majority of minorities in America reside. Inner city public schools typically have fewer resources (finances, facilities, high quality teaching, administrative leadership, community involvement and support) than those located in the more affluent areas. In addition, students attending schools in more affluent areas have outside resources and support that not only compensate for educational deficiencies but also enrich students' educational and life experiences. Similar resources and support are virtually non-existent in predominantly minority low-income communities. Further, certain unique cultural circumstances create gender-related problems for minority youth which contribute to the cycle of disadvantagement.

These social, economic and educational imbalances inhibit minority access to pre-professional and professional education programs and, subsequently, to the licensed professions. For example, high school dropout rates are significantly higher among minorities (especially Blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans) than non-minorities; minority students completing high school are less likely to attend college; minority students attending postsecondary institutions are less likely to complete undergraduate degree requirements; relatively few minority students in four-year baccalaureate programs pursue courses of study that lead to professional licensure. The following table illustrates the problem:

Persistence in Higher Education by Racial or Ethnic Group--U.S. (Astin, 1982)

Group	Percentage Who: Complete High School	Enter College	Complete College	Enter Graduate or Professional School	Complete Graduate or Professional School
Whites	83	38	23	14	8
Blacks	72	29	12	8	4
Chicanos	55	22	7	4	2
Puerto Ricans	55	25	7	4	2
American Indians	55	17	6	4	2

Completion of high school is one key step on the road to professional licensure. However, an Education Department report estimated dropout rates for the class of 1981 (i.e., students who began grade 9 in New York in fall 1977) as follows: American Indians--46%; Blacks--53%; Hispanics--62%; Whites--23%.

Minority students who do complete high school and attend college are not well represented in pre-professional and professional studies. This is reflective of weaker preparation at the elementary and secondary education levels. Thus, during the 1980-81 academic year, out of more than 4,000 bachelor's degrees conferred in the biological sciences in New York State's higher education institutions, 212 or 5.6% and 148 or 3.9% of the total recipients were Black and Hispanic, respectively. Similarly, out of more than 1,900 bachelor's degrees conferred in the physical sciences, Hispanic and Black recipients represented only 39 or 2.1% and 78 or 4.3% of the total. (NYSED, 1982)

In the fall of 1980, full-time undergraduate minority enrollment, at all New York State institutions of higher education, in the biological sciences comprised approximately 7.5% or 1,270 Blacks, 0.3% or 53 American Indians, 3.8% or 646 Hispanics. Total enrollment in the biological sciences for this same period was 16,890. Minority full-time undergraduate enrollment in the physical sciences in the fall of 1980 was comprised of approximately 3.3% or 298 Blacks, 0.2% or 18 American Indians and 1.9% or 170 Hispanics. Total enrollment was 8,996. (NYSED, 1981)

The impact of weaker preparation in the early years of education is most dramatic at the end of the "educational pipeline." Minority enrollments in first-professional programs in New York State institutions of higher education as of fall 1980 were: American Indians, 34 or 0.2%; Hispanics, 532 or 2.4%; Blacks, 781 or 3.4%. Total first-professional enrollments for all ethnic groups during this period were 22,631. There are leakage points in the pipeline to the professions at several stages of elementary and secondary education. Addressing these points will greatly increase the "pool" of potential minority professionals graduating from high school.

The Regents recommend:

That elementary and secondary education institutions make special efforts to prepare and retain minority students in education programs that are required for admission to, and for successful completion of, pre-professional and professional education programs. Efforts to combat attrition among minorities must begin at the pre-school and elementary school levels and continue throughout the high school years. To this end, the following Strategies for Action must be undertaken:

Strategies for Action

B.1. The State Education Department should collaborate with local community organizations and service agencies to develop programs that will enhance the pre-school experiences of minority children. These programs should include activities that focus on improving early childhood and parent education, child care, and other services that could help redress social conditions which impede the educational development of minority children.

B.2. With the assistance of the State Education Department, State Boards for the professions, professional associations and societies, and higher education institutions should collaborate with local school district personnel, beginning in the earliest years of schooling, to prepare and encourage minority students to enroll in programs that will make possible their entry into college preparatory curricula prerequisite for professional study. As necessary, local school districts should provide minority students with academic enrichment courses (e.g., pre-algebra) that foster successful completion of the Regents sequence in English, mathematics, and science, with additional mathematics and/or science wherever possible.

B.3. The State Education Department, collaborating with the State Boards for the professions, the respective associations and societies, and institutions providing pre-professional and professional programs of study, should develop materials that describe the professions, prerequisite course requirements for college entry, and requirements for licensure. In addition, self-instructional materials should be developed for elementary/secondary school counselors and teachers delineating techniques for promoting awareness of professional careers (e.g., visits to schools by minority professionals and visits to professional work sites by students). The materials should be distributed on a statewide basis to be used in promoting career awareness activities. Work/study programs should be established to expose interested high school students to the practice of the professions.

B.4. Local school districts, in carrying forward the Regents Action Plan should focus upon the issues of minority student retention and underrepresentation of minorities in the licensed professions. For example, the high school dropout rate for minorities is significantly higher than for non-minorities. There is also a disproportionately low number of minorities enrolled in honors programs and in academic and Regents sequences which provide the necessary preparation for entry into programs leading to professional licensure. Minority access issues

must be addressed through academic support services and dropout prevention programs. Progress in this area must be closely monitored by the State Education Department. Data concerning enrollment and progress by gender and race should be collected and analyzed annually.

B.5. The State Education Department and local school districts should intensify efforts to improve guidance and other pupil personnel services to minority students. Efforts should be aimed specifically at developing programs that will improve student retention and increase student, parent, and school awareness of career opportunities in the licensed professions. The Department and local school districts, in moving ahead with proposed courses in technology and career orientation for seventh and eighth graders, should give particular attention to the unique needs of minority students.

B.6. Higher education institutions involved in the training of elementary and secondary school teachers and counselors should develop ways to increase prospective teachers' sensitivity to the problems in education that impede minority students' entry to programs leading to careers in the professions. Such components should be introduced and encouraged as a regular part of teacher and counselor training programs.

C. Undergraduate Education

Licensure in the great majority of the professions requires an associate, bachelor's or graduate degree.

The two-year colleges offer important opportunities to enter pre-professional programs since they are normally geographically accessible, relatively inexpensive, and flexible in admissions policies and scheduling. In addition to their career associate degree programs, two-year colleges provide transfer programs to increase the options available to minority students interested in pursuing professional careers that require study beyond the associate degree. In collaboration, two- and four-year institutions can help greatly to assure the availability of a qualified pool of minority applicants for admission to professional study.

Approximately 20 percent of all students enrolled in the State's public and independent higher education sectors are minority. Nonetheless, only a very small percentage of minorities enroll in fields of study leading to careers in the professions. This fact points to the need for colleges to help orient minority students to the possibilities of professional education and practice.

The Regents recommend:

That two- and four-year educational institutions make special efforts to enroll and assist minority students in educational programs that qualify them for licensure in the professions. To that end, the following Strategies for Action must be undertaken:

Strategies for Action

C.1. The State Education Department should request that all colleges and universities should submit with their progress reports for 1986 a plan of

action program aimed at redressing the underrepresentation of minorities in educational programs. In the interim, for 1984-85 and 1985-86, the State Education Department should request that all colleges and universities submit, in a special format, plans for increasing minority access to and retention in pre-professional and professional programs of study.

C.2. The State's public and independent higher education sectors in conjunction with their opportunity programs (College Discovery, SEEK, EOP, HEOP) should make the development of programs to increase minority access to the licensed professions a top priority. The three sectors should implement strategies aimed at enrolling and graduating a progressively greater proportion of minorities in pre-professional and professional education programs.

C.3. The State should increase funding levels for the opportunity programs. The increased funding should be targeted specifically for expanding services to those students who are oriented toward programs leading to professional licensure and practice. These expanded opportunity programs should be based on a contractual agreement between the State Education Department and undergraduate institutions and provide for increased awards and specialized academic support services specifically designed to increase student retention and performance in programs leading to professional licensure.

C.4. Where two- and four-year educational institutions offering pre-professional and professional programs are located within geographic proximity, specific arrangements should be made to facilitate the transfer of minority students interested in pursuing professional careers requiring baccalaureate or graduate degrees.

C.5. Two- and four-year educational institutions should develop and implement supportive service systems (i.e., counseling, financial aid, tutoring, summer enrichment and internship programs and academic year reinforcement activities) designed to prepare and retain minority students enrolled in pre-professional and professional programs of study.

D. Graduate and Professional Education

Graduate and professional education plays a critical role in the advancement of persons to leadership positions. Although many colleges and universities have seen increases in the proportion of minorities entering and completing undergraduate programs of study in the last ten years, minority enrollment and retention rates in graduate and professional programs remain extremely low.

The major obstacles impeding minority participation in and completion of graduate and professional education programs fall into five major categories:

1. Financial Aid — The lack of adequate financial aid for minorities to pursue graduate and professional education is a critical factor. As a result of recent declines in Federal and private financial support for minority students, the situation is becoming progressively worse.

2. Academic Preparation — Insufficient numbers of minority persons are receiving the prerequisite academic skills and encouragement at the undergraduate level and therefore do not meet traditional admission requirements for entry to graduate and professional education programs.

3. Supportive Service Systems -- Additional academic and counseling services are sometimes needed by minority students upon matriculation into a graduate or professional program. Many graduate and professional schools do not provide adequate support for special services, and fail to make efforts to supply special assistance.

4. Environment — A minority student's perception of the environment at a given institution is consistently identified by students as a major factor in his/her participation in and satisfaction with graduate and professional education programs. In addition, research indicates that low minority enrollments and lack of institutional concern for minority students contribute to a sense of isolation and ultimately impede their progress toward successful completion of degree requirements.

5. Information — Minority students are often not aware of the career and employment opportunities available in the various professions. In many instances, minorities are not made aware of the specific training requirements or the scope, benefits, privileges and service opportunities of careers in the licensed professions.

The Regents recommend:

That graduate and professional schools make special efforts to increase the enrollment, retention and graduation of minority students in educational programs leading to licensure in the professions. To that end, the following Strategies for Action must be undertaken:

Strategies for Action

D.1. The State Education Department should enlist the experience and assistance of professional schools with records of success in serving minority students, in order to further statewide action to increase minority enrollment and retention.

D.2. Where four-year undergraduate institutions offering pre-professional programs and graduate institutions providing professional programs of study are located in geographic proximity, "feeder" programs should be designed to facilitate admission of minority students to graduate programs leading to professional licensure.

D.3. Graduate and professional schools should develop and implement supportive service systems (i.e., counseling, financial aid, tutoring, summer programs, and academic year reinforcement activities), that will enable minority students to successfully complete the prerequisites for professional licensure.

D.4. Graduate and professional schools should develop and implement affirmative action activities and programs to recruit, hire and promote

minority faculty and administrators. The affirmative action program should also provide on-going activities to orient and sensitize administrators and faculty to the special needs of minority students.

D.5. The State should establish and fund a statewide graduate and professional opportunities program designed to increase the admission and graduation of minority students in educational programs leading to professional licensure. This program should be based on a contractual agreement between the State Education Department and graduate and professional schools and provide for increased financial aid (fellowships, grants, assistantships) and academic support services (summer enrichment programs, academic year tutoring, and counseling).

VI. APPENDICES

A) Organization Chart of The Office of the Professions, New York State Education Department

B) Professions Regulated by the Board of Regents and the State Education Department

C) Tables

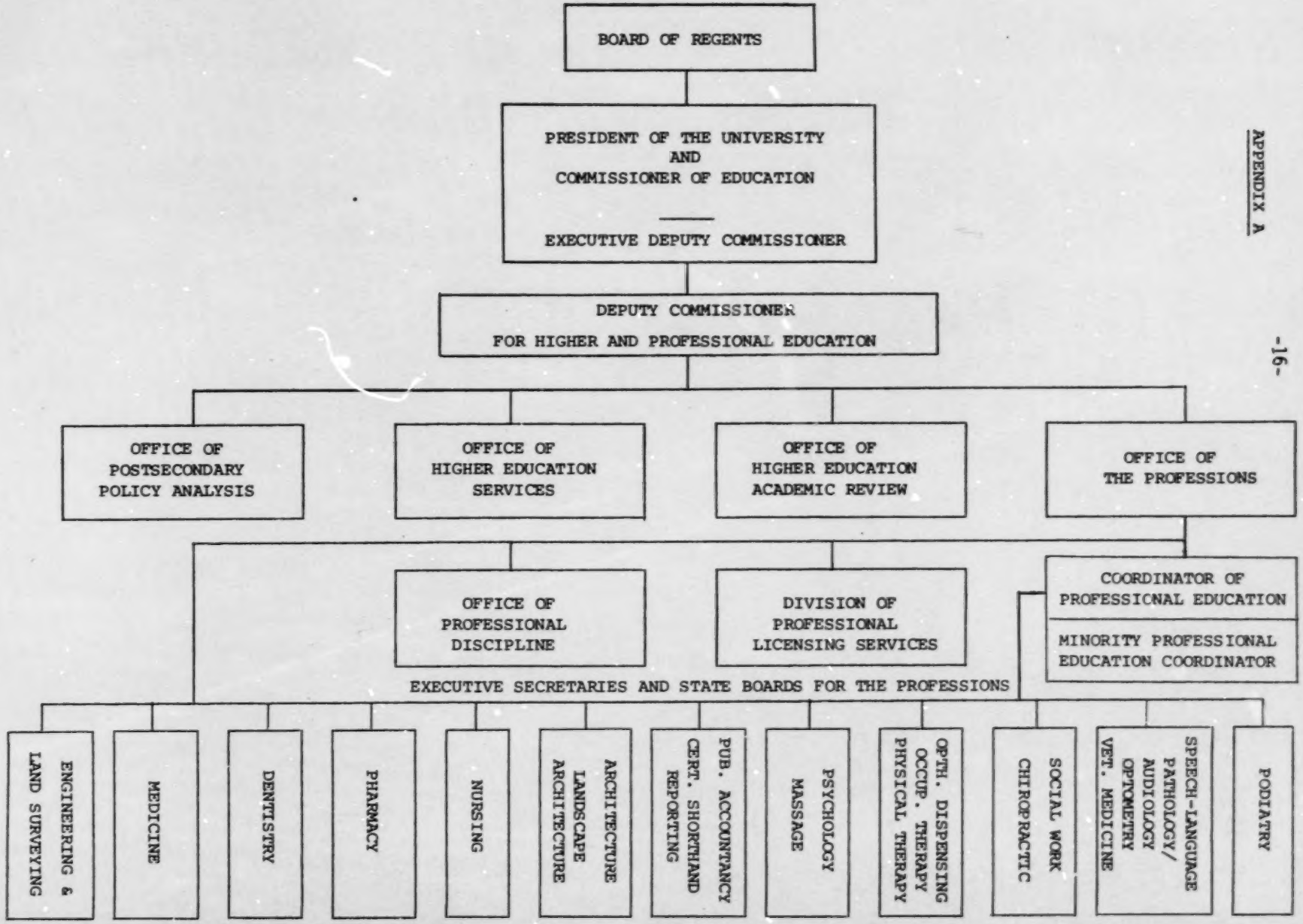
1. Participation Rates by Race - New York State, 1980-81

2. Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Public and Non-Public School Students - Selected Grades - New York State -1982-83

3. Degrees Conferred by Racial/Ethnic Category in New York State 1976-77, 1978-79, 1980-81

D) Summary of the Regents 1983 Conference on the Professions

Organization Chart of The Office of the Professions, New York State Education Department


BOARD OF REGENTS
PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY AND COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION
EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR HIGHER AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION
OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY POLICY ANALYSIS
OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICES
OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMIC REVIEW
OFFICE OF THE PROFESSIONS
OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE
DIVISION OF PROFESSIONAL LICENSING SERVICES
COORDINATOR OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION
MINORITY PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION COORDINATOR
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES AND STATE BOARDS FOR THE PROFESSIONS
ENGINEERING & LAND SURVEYING
MEDICINE
DENTISTRY
PHARMACY
NURSING
ARCHITECTURE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
PUB. ACCOUNTANCY CERT. SHORTHAND REPORTING
PSYCHOLOGY MASSAGE
OPTH. DISPENSING OCCUP. THERAPY PHYSICAL THERAPY
SOCIAL WORK CHIROPRACTIC
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY/ AUDIOLOGY OPTOMETRY VET. MEDICINE
PODIATRY

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B

Professions Regulated by the Board of Regents and the State Education Department

Profession	Practitioners Registered as of 12/31/83
Acupuncture	73
Animal Health Technology	695
Architecture	8,595
Audiology	643
Certified Public Accountancy	29,179
Certified Shorthand Reporting	388
Chiropractic	2,617
Dental Hygiene	8,155
Dentistry	16,289
Land Surveying	1,538
Landscape Architecture	565
Licensed Practical Nursing	77,715
Massage	1,622
Medicine	60,186
Occupational Therapy	2,442
Occupational Therapy Assistant	1,099
Ophthalmic Dispensing	2,783
Optometry	2,285
Pharmacy	16,183
Physical Therapist Assistant	606
Physical Therapy	4,572
Physician's Assistant	1,907
Podiatry	1,800
Professional Engineering	22,158
Psychology	5,566
Public Accountancy	3,364
Registered Professional Nursing	204,880
Social Work	20,990
Specialist's Assistant	15
Speech-Language Pathology	3,444
Veterinary Medicine	2,089
TOTAL	504,543

APPENDIX C

Tables

In the following tables and descriptive statements these definitions were used:

Black Non-Hispanic: A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

Hispanic: A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

White Non-Hispanic: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or in the Middle East.

Other Minorities: a) Asian or Pacific Islander; a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific islands. b) American Indian or Alaskan Native; a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, and who maintains cultural identification through tribunal affiliation or community recognition.

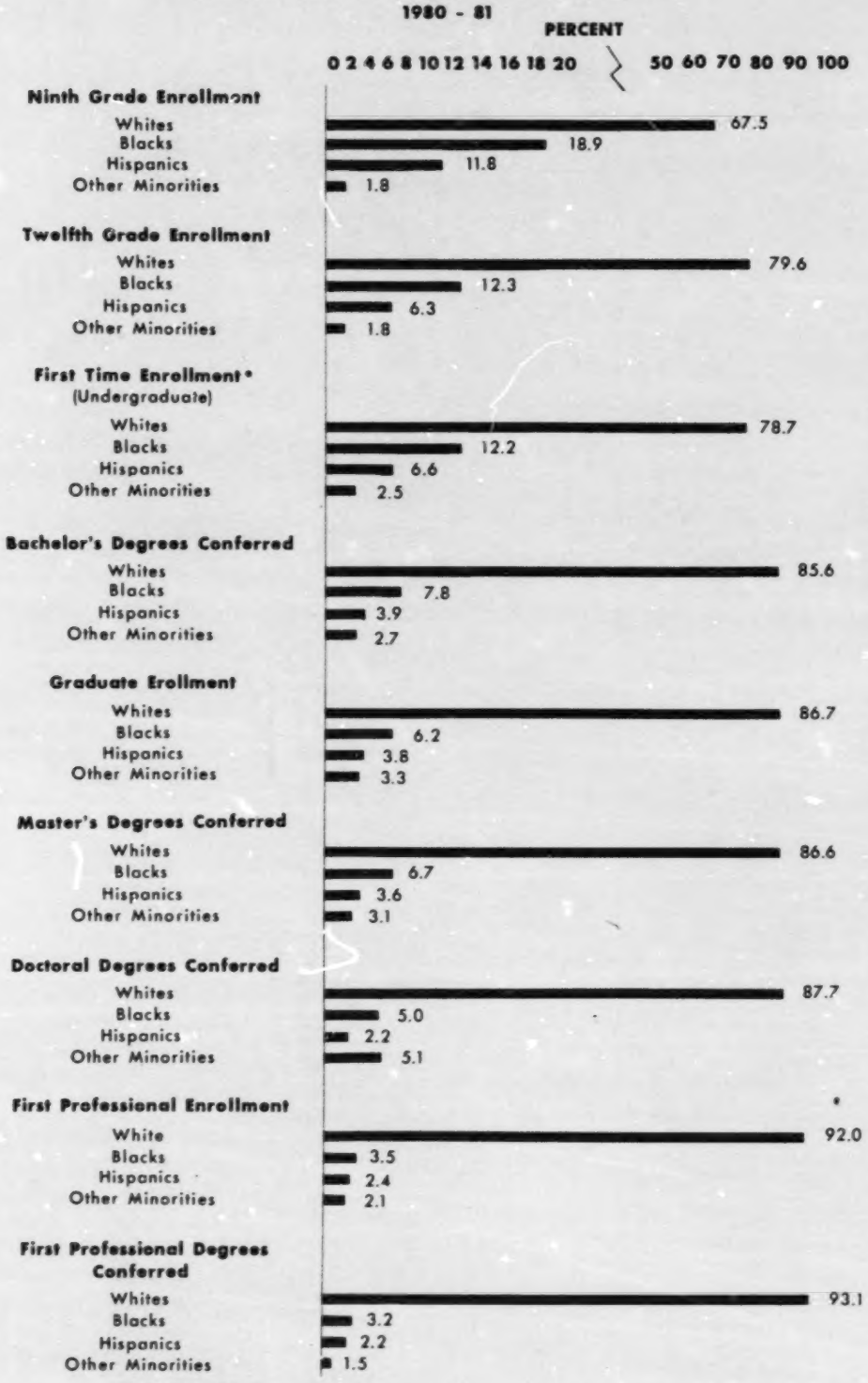
A brief summary of each table follows:

Table 1 Participation Rates by Race - New York State, 1980-81
This graph shows an overview of participation rates by race for the academic year 1980-81. Though a "snapshot" of a given year disparities between enrollments and completion are observable. Blacks and Hispanics receive diminishing shares of our educational "riches" at each succeeding level of education.

Table 2 Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Public and Non-Public School Students - Selected Grades - New York State - 1982-83
This table shows enrollment by race in kindergarten, 9th, and 12th grades in New York State for 1982-83. While 30 percent of kindergarten children are minorities, only 21 percent of 12th graders are so classified. There are major leakage points in this section of the educational pipeline.

Table 3 Degrees Conferred by Racial/Ethnic Category in New York State
This table shows degrees conferred for the years 1976-77, 1978-79, and 1980-81. The number of degrees awarded to minorities over this period increased only slightly. At each successively higher level, the percent of degrees conferred to minorities decreased while the percent conferred to non-minorities increased. This indicates additional leakage points in the educational pipeline.

TABLE 1
PARTICIPATION RATES by RACE - NEW YORK STATE
1980 - 81



*Full-Time Students only

Source : NYS Education Department, Information Center on Education

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 2

Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Public and Non-Public School Students - Selected Grades - New York State

1982-83

	Total Students	American Indian and Alaskan		Black		Asian and Pacific Islander		Hispanic		White	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Kindergarten	211,239	414	0.2%	30,959	14.7%	5,754	2.7%	26,196	12.4%	147,916	70.0%
9th Grade	277,915	601	0.2%	51,373	18.5%	6,096	2.2%	33,171	11.9%	186,674	67.2%
12th Grade	225,675	396	0.2%	27,742	12.3%	4,174	1.8%	15,190	6.7%	178,173	79.0%

Source: NYS Education Department, Information Center on Education

Table 3

Degrees Conferred by Racial/Ethnic Category
Selected Years - New York State*

		Associate		Baccalaureate		First Professional		Master's		Doctorate	
	Year	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Black, Non-Hispanic	1976-77	4,330	9.4%	5,808	7.4%	202	3.8%	1,884	6.1%	104	3.9%
	1978-79	4,296	9.9%	6,485	8.4%	211	3.4%	2,140	7.3%	106	3.7%
	1980-81	4,370	9.9%	6,075	7.8%	192	3.2%	1,903	6.7%	134	5.0%
Hispanic	1976-77	2,079	4.5%	2,749	3.5%	94	1.8%	1,178	3.8%	64	2.4%
	1978-79	1,996	4.6%	2,569	3.3%	89	1.5%	847	2.9%	86	3.0%
	1980-81	2,259	5.1%	3,028	3.9%	131	2.2%	1,038	3.6%	57	2.2%
Other Minorities	1976-77	784	1.7%	1,484	1.9%	82	1.6%	859	2.8%	83	3.1%
	1978-79	604	1.4%	1,722	2.2%	71	1.2%	782	2.7%	87	3.1
	1980-81	728	1.6%	2,132	2.7%	92	1.5%	868	3.1%	135	5.1%
White, Non-Hispanic	1976-77	39,058	84.4%	68,680	87.2%	4,876	92.8%	27,026	87.3%	2,430	90.6%
	1978-79	36,532	84.1%	66,573	86.1%	5,757	93.9%	25,454	87.1%	2,570	90.2%
	1980-81	36,863	83.4%	66,783	85.6%	5,645	93.1%	24,663	86.6%	2,332	87.7%
Total	1976-77	46,251	100.0%	78,721	100.0%	5,254	100.0%	30,947	100.0%	2,681	100.0%
	1978-79	43,428	100.0%	77,349	100.0%	6,128	100.0%	29,223	100.0%	2,849	100.0%
	1980-81	44,220	100.0%	78,018	100.0%	6,060	100.0%	28,472	100.0%	2,658	100.0%

*Does not include non-resident alien and unknown ethnicity categories.

Source: NYS Education Department, Information Center on Education

APPENDIX D

SUMMARY OF THE REGENTS 1983 CONFERENCE ON THE PROFESSIONS

Increasing minority access to the licensed professions was the focus of a Conference on the Professions sponsored by the Board of Regents in New York City on Wednesday, November 16th. The Conference was held at The Roosevelt Hotel.

The purpose of the Conference was to focus attention on the Regents' and State Education Department's goal of increasing access to professional education and licensure for groups currently underrepresented in these areas. Conference participants were asked to discuss a draft Regents action paper entitled Increasing Minority Access to the Licensed Professions. More than 200 people attended the day-long session, including representatives from the 31 professions licensed by the Regents, members of the various State Boards for the professions, State officials, representatives from all levels of education, and representatives from consumer and community organizations. Chancellor Willard A. Genrich and Vice Chancellor Martin C. Barell were among eight Regents who also attended the Conference.

In opening the Conference, Chancellor Genrich explained that racial justice in education has long been a concern of the Board of Regents and State Education Department. In addressing a standing-room-only audience, he noted that various groups, particularly Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans, have been historically underrepresented in the licensed professions. The reasons for the current imbalance are complex and interrelated. The Chancellor summarized the Regents position as follows: "The Regents believe that persons in different ethnic and racial groups have equal potential. However, certain social conditions make achievement in education and employment more difficult for some groups than for others." Chancellor Genrich called for a partnership of all interested parties to bring about needed change. Emphasizing the importance of early intervention he noted, "The educational pipeline that leads to the professions begins very early in a person's life. If we cannot address problems early in the educational pipeline, then even the best programs offered by our professional schools cannot succeed."

The Chancellor noted that there are both moral and practical reasons for New York to work toward equal education and job opportunities. "By making it possible for all members of our society to achieve to the fullest, we can insure a better future. Of all of our resources, the human resource is the most valuable. If we are to see our society grow, we must use that important resource to the fullest," said the Chancellor. In summarizing his feelings on the subject Chancellor Genrich said, "We have lived too long with this problem. I look forward to your support in shaping a Regents paper which will signal an attack on inequality. The time for action is now."

The keynote speaker at the Conference was Dr. Vera King-Farris, President of Richard Stockton State College, Pomona, New Jersey. President King-Farris, for many years a leader in New York's State University System, noted the excellent record of achievement in the area of educational opportunity in New York. She spoke about the "Perils and Promises" of New York's plan to redress under-representation in the professions. She concluded that the time was ripe for strong action to bring about major changes in both our educational system and our society. She endorsed the statement in the draft paper that "...the opportunity to achieve meaningful change has never been greater. Today, men and women committed to

the principles of access and equality hold more positions of influence in our educational system than at any previous time. Never before have there been so many individuals — many of them minorities — who are not only committed to justice but who exercise authority within the very institutions where change is most needed."

President King-Farris, in praising the Regents draft paper as "superb" and "the most comprehensive document on this subject I have seen," noted that adoption of such a statement would be "an historic event." She noted that the paper provides the right "blueprint" for dealing with our concerns.

The afternoon session of the Conference included table discussions in which interested parties exchanged ideas on how to achieve the Regents goal and developed suggestions for improving the draft paper. The Conference closed with an address from Commissioner of Education Gordon M. Ambach. Noting that access to the professions requires successful navigation of a long and often difficult educational pathway, the Commissioner stated, "All New Yorkers, but especially those from historically underrepresented groups, need contact with and assistance from others who have been down that path. Especially important is advice and assistance on how to bridge the intersections of the pathway — for example, the transition from high school to college and from undergraduate study to professional study." The Commissioner noted that different groups or individuals face different obstacles. Therefore, we must be flexible and creative in developing solutions. "The Regents paper cannot and does not include every step necessary to increase minority access to the professions. Its purpose is to inform and guide us, providing a sound foundation for both comprehensive planning and action in the years ahead," explained Commissioner Ambach.

On a personal note, the Commissioner noted that earlier in the day he had visited a public elementary school in the Bronx. He related how children at the very earliest stages of education were being given the kind of parental and community support needed to begin the long and often difficult trip to education and adulthood. "It is here that the pathway to the professions begins," asserted Commissioner Ambach.

The Commissioner pointed out that several specific proposals have already been made by the Department which address a number of the obstacles noted by both President King-Farris and the draft paper. In closing he called for diligence and commitment in the long struggle to redress imbalances in our society. He noted that not only the underrepresented minorities but our society as a whole will benefit from successful efforts to redress imbalances and injustices.

Following the Conference, the Office of the Professions received and reviewed numerous evaluation and comment forms completed by Conference participants. The comments and evaluations were positive and supportive both with respect to the Conference and the draft paper. This information was considered, as well as comments from others who were not able to attend the Conference, in revising the draft paper. The comments and advice provided during and after the Conference helped to shape the final Regents paper and will enhance efforts to improve minority access to the licensed professions.